

BALTIMORE TRUST COMPANY BUILDING
(Bank of America Building
NationsBank Building
Maryland National Bank Building
Mathieson Building
O'Sullivan Building)
10 Light Street
Baltimore
Maryland

HABS No. MD-1119

HABS
MD-1119

PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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Location: 10 Light Street, Baltimore, Maryland, 21201; UTM coordinates: 18.360782.4349902

Present Owner/Occupant: Bank of America

Present Use: Commercial office building and bank

Significance: Baltimore's only "setback" skyscraper, the Baltimore Trust Building is a fine example of the Art Deco commercial style in America. The interior features mosaics by Hildreth Meiere, who designed many decorative features for New York's Radio City Music Hall and St. Bartholomew's Church.

Historian: Laurie Ossman, Ph.D., Summer 2001

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1928-9

2. Architects: Taylor and Fisher; Smith and May. Both firms were based in Baltimore and all four architects had worked in the offices of Parker, Thomas and Rice. Through this connection, the two firms may be seen as successors (in tandem) to Parker, Thomas and Rice (Parker and Thomas prior to 1907), pre-eminent architects of Baltimore's Beaux-Arts and Colonial Revival periods.

R.E. Lee Taylor (1882-1952) was born in Norfolk, Virginia, and received his education at Norfolk Academy and the University of Virginia before ultimately being graduated from MIT in 1904. He joined the Baltimore office of Parker and Thomas soon afterwards. In 1927, he and David Fisher (below) formed their own firm.

David Fisher, Jr. (1892-1978) received his undergraduate degree from Princeton

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and his graduate degree from MIT in 1916. In 1919, following World War I, he joined the Baltimore office of Parker, Thomas and Rice. He was made partner in 1924.

In addition to the Baltimore Trust building, the firm of Fisher and Taylor designed Baltimore's Federal Reserve Building and the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company Building.

Wilson Levering Smith (1878-1931) attended The Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University and also studied (apparently informally) in Europe. He probably joined Parker and Thomas soon after it opened an office in Baltimore in 1901. In 1913, he and Howard May (below) left to form their own firm.

Howard May (1879-1941), another Baltimore native, received his only known formal instruction in architecture from a M. Chequier, a expatriate French architect who gave design lessons in Baltimore along the lines of an Ecole des Beaux Arts atelier. Like Smith, May probably joined the Baltimore office of Parker and Thomas soon after it opened in 1901 and stayed until 1913, when he and Smith went into independent partnership.

In addition to the Baltimore Trust Building, the firm of Smith and May designed commercial structures for Union Trust, Maryland Trust and Mercantile Trust. They also designed several Baltimore County Schools and University of Maryland buildings.¹

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:

1929-40: Baltimore Trust Company

1940-9: Rubber company executive Raymond J. Funkhousner buys the property and renames it the O'Sullivan Building.

1949: Funkhousner sells building to partnership of Fidelity National Bank and the Mathieson Company. Building renamed Mathieson Building.

1955: Equitable Life Insurance Company assumes Mathieson Company's share in the building for five dollars as part of a corporate takeover. Thus while the building is still called "The Mathieson Building," it is owned by Fidelity National Bank in partnership with Equitable.

1960: Equitable Life Insurance Company assumes sole ownership.

¹ City of Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP), Maryland State Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form, survey # B-4017, 1984. No source for the information on the architects or their commissions is given.

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1962: Building purchased back by Fidelity Baltimore National Bank. Structure renamed Maryland National Bank.

1993: NationsBank takes over Maryland National Bank; renames building NationsBank Building.

1999: Bank of America takes over NationsBank and renames structure Bank of America Building. Locally, the building is still commonly known as the Maryland National Bank Building.²

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers

a. Exterior stonework designer (tentative attribution): Louis Fentner (New York)

b. Mosaic tile floor design: attrib. Hildreth Meiere. Hildreth Meiere (1892-1961) was born in New York City. Encouraged to pursue art, her family took her to Florence, Italy to begin her studies when she was a teenager. Upon her return to the United States she continued her studies at the Art Students League in New York and at art schools in San Francisco during World War I. It is likely that the Bay Area, with its powerful Arts and Crafts community centered on Berkeley and Barnard Maybeck, may have influenced Meiere's career-defining belief in the unity of all the arts in architecture. After World War I, she returned to New York where she met architect Bertram Goodhue, who has recently left his successful partnership with Ralph Adams Cram in order to pursue his own interest in the use of symbolic form and ornament in both ecclesiastical and secular architecture. Meiere often worked for Goodhue, including such projects as the mosaics of St. Bartholomew's Church in New York, the dome of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., and the floors and ceilings of the Nebraska State Capitol, for which she received the 1928 Gold Medal in Mural Painting from the Architectural League of New York. Thus, when she received the commission for the Baltimore Trust Building, Meiere was at the height of her considerable fame. Meiere is best remembered today for her work at New York's Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall, where she collaborated again with some members of the Nebraska State Capitol group (including sculptor Lee Lawrie), with the addition of some new WPA-artists, such Mexican muralist Diego Rivera.³

c. Murals in Lobby: R. McGill Mackall (Baltimore). Robert McGill Mackall (1889-1982) worked almost exclusively in Baltimore, where he was equally known for his murals and stained-glass windows. (Coincidentally, he was also a

² City Land Records, Liber MLP 9705 Folio 12; Liber MLP 7785 folio 466; Liber SCL 5200 folio 170; Liber MLP 7909, folio 170; Liber MLP 7277 folio 16; Liber MLP 7913 folio 601; Folio MLP 7785 folio 466.

³ "Hildreth Meiere," website of Nebraska State Capitol, <http://www.capitol.org/goodteam/hometeam.html> Date: 2/21/02.

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cousin-in-law of American Impressionist Gari Melchers, who supposedly hosted Mackall's wedding reception at his house). The scion of an old Calvert County family which proudly claimed several Maryland governors and military heroes in its ancestry, Mackall grew up on Charles Street in Baltimore. According to family histories, he studied at the Art Students League in New York, the Munich Academy and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. His mural work strongly suggests an emphasis on draftsmanship, and conveys an illustration-like linearity reminiscent of Andrew Wyeth. Mackall was a traditionalist, stating that his murals, in particular, were not intended to "hit you in the eye with cubistic [*sic*] allegory or super-realistic detail." Other mural work included the panoramic backdrop for the Hall of Tools, a Smithsonian American History installation; "The Birth of the National Anthem," for Fort McHenry National Park, and "Maryland's Heroes," for the Baltimore War Memorial in City Hall Plaza. Among his recorded stained-glass installations are three large panels depicting the infancy of Christ (Nativity, Adoration and First Miracles) for Christ Church, Baltimore. Curiously, the family biography notes his authorship of only the first of the Baltimore Trust murals, "The Landing of Lord Calvert in 1630." Although unsigned, it seems highly likely that the other two murals in the series are also by Mackall, given the identical style, hand and palette. Mackall also painted a number of portraits, and a few easel paintings. According to family sources, he was a member of the Arts Club of Washington, DC, suggesting that further study might reveal additional Washington commissions, particularly during the WPA era.⁴

d. Metalwork and chandeliers: Samuel Yellin (Philadelphia). Born in Mogilera, Galacia, Poland, Yellin was enrolled in a specialized school for arts and crafts as a child and, through the traditional system of apprenticeship to a local Russian blacksmith, became a master smith at the age of 17. In 1902 he left home and is believed to have traveled to Russia, Belgium, Germany, Italy, France and England. Yellin moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1906, joining his mother and sisters who had emigrated to the U.S. ca. 1900. While doing some minor metalworking jobs, he enrolled in evening classes at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Arts where, in 1908, he was asked to develop a class in wrought iron. He taught and lectured there until 1923. A transcribed 1926 lecture confirms that Yellin was a proponent of textbook Arts and Crafts philosophy:

It is most important that a piece of work shall be harmonious from every point of view. I mean that, besides being a part of its surroundings, it must harmonize within itself.

I am a staunch advocate of tradition in the matter of design. I think that we should follow the lead of the past masters and seek

⁴ "The Mackall Family of Calvert County, Maryland," <http://rmackall.home.mindspring.com/Mackall/Mackall.html>.
Date: 2/21/02.

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our inspiration from their wonderful work. They saw the poetry and rhythm of iron. Out of it they made masterpieces not for a day or an hour but for the ages. We should go back to them for our ideas in craftsmanship, to their simplicity and truthfulness. The superficial and the tricky, which are spreading over the world of art like a disease, doom themselves to destruction. The beautiful can never die.⁵

Yellin opened the Industrial Ornamental Forge Company in a rented two-room apartment in the top floor of an apartment building on North 5th Street in Philadelphia, moving to a larger space on Arch Street in 1915. At that time, he changed the company name to Samuel Yellin, Metalworker, which he retained throughout the rest of his career. The Arch Street shop expanded gradually as Yellin trained more workers to fulfill an increasing number of commissions, from architects including Wilson Eyre, Paul Cret, Bertram Goodhue and Albert Kahn. Kahn, in particular, acted as Yellin's advocate in Detroit and helped him get commissions such as the Detroit Institute of Arts, as well as Cranbrook. Yellin is known to have executed wrought iron furniture and light fixtures, as well as door hinges and strike plates (the last two recorded at La Tourelle, the suburban Pittsburgh estate of Fallingwater patron Edgar Kaufman, Jr.) and railings (such as those in the gallery of Reynolda House, in Winston-Salem, NC). Collectors now distinguish between early Yellin pieces and ones from the peak years of the 1930s, when the volume of work meant many signed pieces were designed and executed by members of the workshop, not Yellin himself. Yellin built a museum adjacent to his workshop to display examples of antique iron work he collected during his European travels. Although Yellin died in 1940, the company is still owned and operated by his descendants in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Indicative of his historical self-consciousness, the company archivist (Yellin's granddaughter) has noted that Yellin retained drawing and photographs for every known commission.¹

5. Original plans and construction: Believed lost.⁶

6. Alterations and additions: 1993—Lighting and roof decoration program, including gilding of ribs on mansard roof.

⁵"Samuel Yellin," <http://blue.temple.edu/~crafts/mjcc/local/history/biographies/b204.htm>. Reynolda Gallery railing: <http://www.reynoldahouse.org/iron.htm>. Date: 2/21/02. Samuel Yellin, "Craftsmanship," speech delivered at Architectural Club of Chicago, Chicago, March 9, 1926, excerpted in review of Samuel Yellin, Metalworker. <http://bookmasters.com/skipjack/rr003.htm>. Date: 2/21/02.

⁶ John Dorsey and James D. Dilts, A Guide to Baltimore Architecture, 3rd ed. (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1997) 150. Dorsey and Dilts note that drawings and records were destroyed when the firm of Taylor and Fisher closed.

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B. Historical Context

The Baltimore Trust Company Building marks an epilogue to the post-1904 Fire commercial building boom in Baltimore. Its fateful completion on the eve of the stock market crash of October 1929 and virtual abandonment for nearly a decade thereafter made the building's Art Deco style—suggestive of progress, luxury and modernity—a pathetically ironic emblem of Baltimore's shattered Depression-era economy.

The 1928-9 Baltimore Trust building replaced the 1901 Parker and Thomas-designed International Trust Company Building which had survived the Great Fire of 1904. After a series of mergers, the Baltimore Trust Company gained ownership of the Light Street property in 1910. While many companies elected to relocate a few blocks to the west of the traditional Calvert Street financial and commercial corridor after the Great Fire (in part because larger building lots were still available in the vicinity of Charles Street), the rare survivors (such as the Mercantile Safe Deposit and Alex. Brown company buildings) maintained their old headquarters in the district, supplementing them, as needed, with rental office spaces or (as in the case of the Mercantile Safe Deposit) an additional new office building closer to Charles Street. By 1928, when the Baltimore Trust Company chose to rebuild, its lot on Light Street (between the traditional financial center on Calvert and the newer one on Charles) had become prime real estate.

While it may seem like a stretch to link the 1928-9 Baltimore Trust Building to the Great Fire from two decades earlier, ornamental panels on the building make the connection to the Fire manifest. These panels attest to the enduring rhetorical viability of the 1904 Fire to represent the city's self-proclaimed virtues of dauntless progress, revitalized prosperity and triumph over adversity. It also seems likely that the Baltimore Trust panels specifically served to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Fire, which would have coincided with the grand opening of the Art Deco skyscraper.

The need for additional office space was the pragmatic reason for replacing the 1901 structure. In doing so, the company also gained the opportunity to make a virtually unique (in Baltimore) statement of progress and modernity in its choice of the Art Deco style. The flurry of new construction in the decade or so after the Great Fire left the downtown area, by the end of World War I, well-stocked with mid-rise Beaux-Arts commercial buildings such that relatively few were being built in this area in the 1920s. Those that were tended to follow the classicizing stylistic lead of landmarks such as Parker & Thomas, Hale & Rogers's B&O Railroad Company Building (1905-6) or Parker, Thomas & Rice's Baltimore Gas and Electric Company Building (1916). A great deal of this Beaux-Arts character was lost in the redevelopment of Charles Street in the 1960s (from Hopkins Plaza at the south end to Charles center at the north, with the Morris Mechanic Theater in the middle). In Baltimore, as in most major cities in the post-World War I period of immigration, labor organization and social unrest, Beaux-Arts classicism was the preferred architectural language of the city's patron caste. [Fairly or not, architectural classicism was perceived as the rhetorical prerogative of the ruling class.] The Baltimore Trust Company Building maintained the historicizing preference of the Beaux-Arts tradition—albeit with

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references to the Gothic cathedral in exterior formal and decorative elements, and in the newly abstracted, geometricized formal vocabulary of the Art Deco style. While it did not turn its back on traditions such as the use of sculpture to specify meaning or axial planning or historicist formal references, the Baltimore Trust Building moved that tradition in Baltimore one or two giant steps forward.

Sadly, the stock market crash of October 1929 drove the Baltimore Trust Company into bankruptcy and the building was vacated less than a year after it opened. It remained virtually empty until 1940, when the economic resurgence of the manufacturing sector to support World War II gave rubber company manager Raymond J. Funkhousner adequate investment capital to purchase the building for rental office space and adequate clientele to make his investment worthwhile.

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character and context: The Baltimore Trust Building is an outstanding example of an Art Deco setback skyscraper.

The term "Art Deco" was coined in the 1960s in reference to the 1925 Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris, which was defined by historian Bevis Hilliard as the watershed moment of the style which, generally speaking, bridged the geometric clarity and machine aesthetic of Modernism with traditional principles of design and decoration.⁷ The Baltimore Trust Building was cutting-edge design. It was the tallest building in Baltimore when it was built and remained so for several decades. Stylistically, it was the first tall building in the city to eschew the Beaux-Arts "attenuated palazzo" formula institutionalized there by Parker and Thomas at the turn of the twentieth century, following the Great Fire of 1904.⁸ It is contemporary with the Art Deco skyscraper archetype, New York's Chrysler Building (1928-30), as well as with Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's Nebraska State Capitol (1920-32), with which it shares a remarkably similar sculptural style. Furthermore, there is a direct link between the Baltimore project and the decorative program of the Goodhue building, cited by Richard Guy Wilson as, "a prime source for American Modernism in the 1920s": artist Hildreth

⁷The precise definition, either philosophical or formal, of Art Deco has never been firmly established. For a brief discussion of this problem, see: J. Laurie Ossman, "Review of *Rediscovering Art Deco U.S.A.*," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 54.3 (Sept. 1995): 362-3.

⁸ Some mid-rise Beaux-Arts buildings in Baltimore predate the work of Parker and Thomas (Parker, Thomas and Rice after 1907), most notably Carson and Sperry's Equitable Building at 10 North Calvert Street. Still, the coincidence of the Great Fire of 1904 and subsequent downtown rebuilding program with the stylistic shift away from the picturesque at the turn of the 20th century meant that there was a uniformity of style in Baltimore's tall buildings after 1905 that the Baltimore Trust Building challenged.

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Meiere participated in both.⁹ The Baltimore building pre-dates both Radio City Music Hall (1931-6) and the Empire State Building (1930-1).

In form and conception, the Baltimore Trust building draws on slightly earlier models for its version of Art Deco, most notably Raymond Hood's American Radiator Building in New York (1924). Other prototypes include: Ralph Walker's New York Telephone Building (also known as the Barclay-Vesey Building, 1922-6) and Eliel Saarinen's widely-published entry in the Chicago Tribune Building competition of 1922. The similarity between the Baltimore Trust building and Hood's American Radiator Building is the most striking because the two share the use of an abstracted Gothic vocabulary (albeit with round arches, in both cases) to emphasize the height of the setback units of the building mass, then dramatize the elaborate decorated pinnacles, well above pedestrian view, with gilding. The Gothic treatment drew on the historic associations of the Gothic style with soaring height and structural/skeletal ingenuity expressed in concert with massive masonry. Towers in Gothic buildings provided historic sources to inspire dynamic massing and embellishment of the skyscraper's vertical format. The description of skyscrapers as "Cathedrals of Commerce" referred, in large part, to the co-opting of the historic style associated with religious monuments by designers seeking a historic matrix for modern tall building design. The carefully-considered and integral symbolism of the Baltimore Trust's decorative program, together with the participation of some nationally-known artists and craftspeople and the use of the Gothic as a historic point of reference also reveal the underlying link between the seemingly antithetical Art Deco style and Arts and Crafts design philosophy. Within a year or two, architects like Hood (in his McGraw-Hill building of 1930-2) would eschew the historical references and rely instead on the clear expression of the steel frame curtain wall construction as an eloquent representation of Modernity, in and of itself.

The profusion of sculptural embellishment of the Baltimore Trust Building firmly links it to the skyscraper generation of the still-historically grounded 1920s. Not only does its use of Gothic architectural forms convey grandeur and tradition, but the mural mass of the walls acts as an attenuated easel for the display of sculpted symbols, both local and general in reference, that express the values the building and its patron wished to represent to the public. This reliance on symbolic ornament referring to literary sources or historical events allows the Baltimore Trust building, in spite of its then-startling height and streamlined massing, to function as an updated version of its Beaux-Arts neighbors and not a rejection of the historicist tradition which they had carried forward through the previous generation of architectural innovation.

A list of ornamental motifs and their meanings is included in this report as an Appendix.

⁹ Richard Guy Wilson, "Architecture in the Machine Age," The Machine Age in America, 1918-1941 (New York: Abrams, 1986): 150.

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2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Lot size 195' (east-west) x 112' (north-south) 509' (34 stories) in height at center.

2. Foundations: Steel reinforced concrete

3. Walls: Brick and limestone. The building is massed as three adjacent brick towers sharing one rectangular limestone base, with the short sides to the north and south. The two twenty-story flanking towers share the same facade plane as the central 34-story tower on the long east (main) entrance on Light Street. The west facade projects the two lower towers forward one bay each, creating a slightly u-shaped plan. While the wall articulation on this west "rear" facade is no different from the others, it is the only facade to lack any monumental expression on the interior and had no entranceway incorporated into its design. The top four stories of each tower is heavily embellished with carved limestone ornament and gilding.

4. Structural system, framing: Steel frame

5. Openings

a. Doorways and doors: In the limestone base of the building, four-story arched entrances are defined by coved arches, outlined in two rows of banded roll moldings, embellished with sculpted symbolic medallions (see Appendix for inventory). All three doorways use the same form and materials, expanded or repeated to fit the wider, main entrance on Light Street. The south (Redwood Street) facade has a blind opening, treated like the north (Baltimore Street) doorway, yet filled in with a storefront window (see 5b., windows, below). The main entry on the east side (Light Street) is treated in a tripartite a-b-a rhythm, with the wider center section containing two revolving doors. Each narrow side bay contains a regular hinged door. All doors are bronze framed, with tempered plate glass. The jambs are treated with banded fruit and floral ornament surmounted by the heads of owls. The lintel directly over the doors intersperses a scallop shell motif with an abstract zig-zag pattern. A glass transom area (lights across the entire opening) features the street address number in the center. The lintel of this element features acorns interspersed with the geometric pattern. Green marble panels fill in six transom openings above this. The marble band is capped by a heavier, more ornate bronze cornice featuring rosettes and abstracted acanthus, surmounted by pelicans. The treatment of the doorframe on the reverse (interior) is identical. Above this glazing rises to a semicircular fanlight at the fourth story level. Ornamental bronze bands define a tripartite a-b-a division of

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the opening, as well as yet another transom level beneath the arch springer, as well as two concentric bands within the fanlight.

b. Windows and openings: In the four story limestone base, windows are given a more elaborate treatment. Storefronts have highly ornate cast bronze window frames, featuring a plethora of local symbols (see Appendix). Above these appear relatively unembellished bronze frame, double hung windows. On the third and fourth stories, the windows are treated as a vertical unit, with a green marble panel conveying the floor level division. These openings also have bronze frames. Small arched windows, like arrow-slits in medieval battlements, appear under the arches of the corbel arcading that runs around the building at the top of the limestone base. These appear in a rhythm of three windows followed by two unpunctured arches all the way around the building. They appear to have bronze casement frames.

The division of the first and second level windows within the brick shaft of the building are embellished with rosette panels in two alternating patterns. From pedestrian level, the fifth (lower) story windows are barely visible. The frames appear to be steel or aluminum. The openings for the next eighteen stories are not embellished. In the center block, however, the openings are all set within a continuous bay recess, which emphasizes the verticality of the tower.

The twenty-story side towers' windows are not recessed, and are paired within bay openings. The top four levels of each twenty-story tower are heavily embellished with abstracted Gothic ornament, and gilded for visual emphasis. A limestone panel carved with a griffin or eagle's head surmounts each window unit, two per bay (three bays each tower face on east and west; eleven to north and south, with the end bays of each slightly narrower than the other nine). Above this level, Each bay contains a three-story arched opening detailed with Gothic style tracery. Each opening is divided in half (corresponding to the window units below), with a marble filled panel concealing the floor division. Tracery defines two crocketed circular openings and a spandrel within the arched top. Above this, another level of carved limestone panels (alternating rosettes and gargoyles superimposed over sunbursts) is emphasized by the division of bays by schematized buttress forms.

At this level, the corners of the central tower are defined so as to create a transition between the side towers and the next fourteen stories of the central tower. The end bays of the central five-bay tower, from level 20 to 25, terminate in ornamented pinnacles that taper the tower as it reaches the next major mass division at level 26.

The pinnacles are treated as hexagonal towers half-adhered to the chamfered corner of the square tower. Each shows three "full" sides and a half

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side where the tower joins the main mass. On each side, the central "full" bay, facing diagonally outward from the tower corners, is entirely filled with a buttress in the form of an eagle with wings outstretched. The carving style is very linear and flattened, emphasizing the silhouette rather than plastic detail. On either side of the eagle buttress, the full bay openings feature three levels of double-hung steel frame windows, the highest having an arched top. Marble panels fill the blind opening at floor level divisions. A conical roof is sheathed in serrated copper bands, creating a shingled or scalloped texture. The point of the tower roof is capped with an octagonal copper battlement. From the chamfered corner of the main tower, a single, unembellished double-hung window overlooks the peak of each tower.

The masonry treatment of the tower walls also shifts to more visual complexity above the twentieth floor. Limestone quoins define the corners of the brick walls and bay divisions. At level 24, the window treatment grows more elaborate with a segmental arched opening surmounted by the rosette and sunburst motif limestone panels. At 25, the openings are semicircular at the top and capped by an abstracted wave or tree motifs that are emphatically vertical and visually lighter (due to the openness of the negative space of the carving). This openness balances the massiveness of the limestone-quoined piers that rise, at the 26th level balcony, to form massive eagle buttresses.

The tower, now an irregular octagon due to the chamfered corners, rises four more stories (with two recessed bay openings per side on north and south; three at east and west) treated, as below, with twinned metal frame windows terminating in a semi-circular arch at the top. The piers, at this stage, are brick with limestone quoins until the level of the arch springer, at which point they become all-limestone. Above these semi-circular openings, the bay sub-division of the window lights below is reiterated as a rib between two narrow semi-circular openings in the limestone mass. Above these, carved panels featuring shields flanked by bellflowers appear. The piers, from this point, rise to form massive, outward-curving wave forms at the top level.

6. Roof shape, covering: The penultimate tower roof is a three and one half story mansard in form, clad in patinated, standing seam copper panels, with foliate patterned iron ribs highlighted in 14-karat gold leaf. The roofs of the lower stages, since they double as balconies, are concrete slab with gravel textured surface and scuppers for drainage.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Contemporary floor plans on file with building management office indicate no major alterations to plan have taken place, in spite of the insertion of a variety of post-historic partition walls (many temporary). As dictated by the structural system,

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twin elevator and service cores in the lower side units act as the primary circulation space of the U-shaped plan and offices radiate from those symmetrical cores in axial corridors.

2. Stairways: Two short flights of travertine stairs lead from the main entry foyer to the main banking room (east to west). A pair of walnut service doors appears on either side of the first landing. Both the top and bottom of this stair are hung with full-height (three-story) wrought iron gates.

Utilitarian fire stairs in cast concrete with iron railings adjacent to elevator shafts. On axis with the main (Light Street) entrance, a spiral stair in travertine with wrought iron handrail leads down to the safe deposit vaults and up to the balcony overlooking the main banking floor. At the south end of the main lobby, a monumental flight of stairs rises to this mezzanine level as well. This element provides visual balance for the north entry (the other terminus of the long axis of the room). Offices are located underneath the landing of this south lobby stair.

3. Flooring: Mosaic tile floor in foyer and lobby.

a. Light Street foyer: Travertine with mosaic of a clipper ship in central medallion surrounded by four decorative circles in various colored marbles. The cross-axis to the elevators is floored in travertine. The stair landing features another clipper, this time in brass inlay in the marble mosaic floor.

b. Main banking lobby: Three circular decorative fields with allegorical images are linked by geometric ornament, all executed in marble mosaic. The southernmost of these depicts a female figure with a coronet of fishes (presumably a personification of the bounty of the water) overlooking Baltimore's Harbor. The city is shown in a highly schematic bird's eye view, in which piers are indicated, and three steamships appear in the water. The Baltimore skyline, emphasizing the Baltimore Trust tower itself, is also shown. This specifies the mosaic to the contemporary setting, as well as links the building and its patron the the city as a whole.

The central allegory depicts four figures supporting a globe, upon which North and South America are shown at center. The figure at SE, a male displaying machine cogs, represents industry and manufacturing or, more generally, work and labor. At SW, a female figure seated on an Ionic capital looks up and also gestures upward with open hands. No material attributes indicate what she is supposed to represent, while the gesture may be a deliberately non-denominational depiction of generic piety. At NW a male figure in Roman armor with a shield must represent conflict, while at NE, a female figure unspools thread, suggesting not only the local textile industry, but perhaps Fate and time as well. Thus the central allegory can be read on a local level (manufacturing, war, faith and textiles) or on the more existential one of work, faith, conflict and fate.

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The north medallion shows the standard winged helmet of Mercury, the Roman God of Commerce and Transportation, transposed to a female figure. A train appears behind her and she unravels a length of track in her hand, suggesting that the transportation meaning is meant to be emphasized.

The borders of the floor are a light brown travertine, with a lighter colored travertine serving as the field for the marble mosaics.

Upper level floors viewed all have standard industrial grade carpeting.

4. Wall Finish

a. Masonry: Beige travertine is the base material of the floors and lower level walls. Green serpentino marble forms the dado and the base of the tellers' cages. The twenty monolithic fluted marble columns on the balcony of the main lobby (two pairs of ten, running north south along the long axis) display a variety of colored marbles and share a simple, Doric capitals in travertine that, in turn, transition into the scrolled corbels that support the cross beams of the decorative ceiling.

b. Murals: Four illustrative, approximately 12 x 26' panels by Robert McGill Mackall depict Maryland in 1730, 1830 and 1930. All use the importance of water for the state's economy as a unifying device. The 1634 panel shows the first colonists arriving in Maryland on *The Ark & The Dove*. The 1730 panel illustrates Baltimore Harbor and shows construction of a pier, indicative of early trade in the city. The 1830 panel shows a view of the city's commercial district at that time, with the clipper ship *Anna McKim*. The 1930 panel, somewhat "WPA" in style, shows a crowd of burly laborers with the skyline of the modern city (emphasizing, again, the Baltimore Trust Building) behind them.

Areas seen in upper level corridors and offices appear to retain no historic finish or treatment.

5. Ceiling

a. Light Street entry foyer: Axial barrel vault, with coffering suggested by the repetition of regularly-spaced, square motifs alternating between a stylized eagle and a geometric block. These motifs are stencilled in gold on the off-white plaster surface. The trumeau over the main axial entry features a stencilled gold sunburst. A limestone frieze is carved with low-relief clipper ships on escutcheons.

b. Main lobby: Each bay, as defined by the second-level colonnade, features a massive cross beam. Gold-stencilled square rosette panels within each richly colored blue or red bay field create an illusion of coffering.

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At the north end, the Baltimore Street entry bay is defined by a short barrel vault, stenciled in the same eagle pattern as the Light Street foyer.

6. Metalwork

a. Bronze: From the Light Street entry foyer, a cross axis leads to two elevator lobbies. To the north, six elevators are placed on each side of the central corridor. To the south, there are three, then a short flight of travertine stairs leads to a conference room. The doors to the room are identical to the elevator doors. Each pair of polished bronze elevator doors features eight panels decorated in a somewhat dated Neoclassical style with urns and foliage. On the south side, a spectacular bronze mailbox captures mail from a mail chute above. The wall-mounted box features owls on the corners and an eagle with wings spread in center. Unlike the elevator doors, the mailbox appears to have been designed specifically for this building.

b. Wrought iron: In addition to the entry gates (noted above) Samuel Yellin produced an enormous quantity of interior decorative ironwork for the lobby area. Each wall is divided into four bays on either side of the main entry axis. (The southernmost is filled in, but treated the same as the others). Each of the sixteen openings is surrounded by wrought-iron grilles in the same pattern as the entry gates. Within each opening, three states or countries served by the bank are named on integral gold-stenciled plaques. Flags corresponding to the state or country are hung from poles from the balcony railing immediately above.

7. Mechanical Equipment

a. HVAC: Compressors appear to date to ca. 1990.

b. Lighting: Twenty original chandeliers by Samuel Yellin still hang in the bay openings of the balcony of the main lobby.

c. Plumbing: Some original pipes still in use. Fixtures upgraded *ad hoc* since 1960s. No particular historic character intact.

D. Site: Urban setting, no plantings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: Originals believed destroyed when architectural office of Taylor and Fisher closed.

B. Early Views: In the Maryland Historical Society, a 1950 view labeled "the Mathesson [sic]

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Building” carries the digital catalogue #Z24.1553. A general view of Light Street ca. 1935 (digital cat. #Z24.269, collection Maryland Historical Society) also shows the building.

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<http://bookmasters.com/skipjack/rr003.htm>. Date: 2/21/02.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: The Yellin workshop in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, maintains an archive which might provide drawings, contracts and correspondence related to the commission. A search of local newspapers at the time of various sales and deed transfers might yield additional information or historic views. Given that, for much of its history, much of the building was rented for office space, the building itself is not indexed by name by the Baltimore Sun.

E. Supplemental Material: Appendix of exterior ornamental program.

PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

During the summer of 2001, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Maryland Historical Trust, in coordination with the City of Baltimore's Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) and Preservation Maryland, recorded ten historic buildings and sites within Baltimore's Central Business District through large-format photography and original historical research. The heart of the downtown area and focus of intensive redevelopment efforts, Baltimore's Central Business District is a designated city historic district and home to a diverse array of historic commercial and civic buildings, churches, theaters and other landmarks. Many of them predate the district's Great Fire of 1904 and chronicle Baltimore's rise as a financial, commercial and civic center. This project, coordinated by Martin Perschler, Collections Manager, HABS/HAER, and Catherine Lavoie, Senior Historian, HABS, and resulting in more than 150 photographs by Baltimore photographer James W. Rosenthal for HABS and ten detailed architectural histories by Laurie Ossman, PhD., also a Baltimore resident, grew out of concern about the recent loss of the Merchants & Miners Transportation Company Building at 17 Light Street and other buildings of architectural distinction in Baltimore.

Ranging chronologically from the Peale Museum (1814) to the Baltimore Trust Company Building (1929), and in function from Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1846) to the Gayety Theatre (1906), the ten landmarks selected for this study illustrate the architectural diversity of the district and the myriad forces that have informed the district's growth and evolution over time. The documentation resulting from this project formed the basis of a photographic exhibit that was launched at the Maryland Historical Society in May 2002 during National Historic Preservation Month.

The ten historic buildings and sites that were studied during the project are:

Alex. Brown & Sons Company Building (HABS MD-1121)

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B&O Railroad Company Headquarters Building (HABS MD-1122)
Baltimore Trust Company Building (HABS MD-1119)
Gayety Theatre (HABS MD-1123)
Mercantile Trust & Deposit Company (HABS MD-191)
Monument Square & the Battle Monument (HABS MD-1126 and MD-185)
Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church (HABS MD-1124)
Peale Museum (HABS MD-398)
Pennsylvania Railroad Company District Office Building (HABS MD-1125)
Vickers Building (HABS MD-1120)

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APPENDIX I

BALTIMORE TRUST COMPANY BUILDING: INVENTORY OF EXTERIOR ORNAMENT
& MOTIFS

Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
Window frame: colonnette	G, N, S, E	black-eyed susan or daisy	Maryland state flower	B
		oak leaf	strength	B
		rose	virtue, morality	B
Window frame: capital		owl	wisdom, vigilance	B
Window frame: lintel		scallop shell	generic sea/water	B
		crab	Baltimore, Chesapeake	B
		beehive	industry, diligence	B
		ear of corn	fertility, agriculture, poss. native American heritage	B
Door jambs	G, N, S, E	grapes	prosperity, abundance	B
		owls	wisdom, vigilance	B
		forget-me-nots/ hydrangeas	tradition, memory	B
		oak leaves	strength	B
		ear of corn	fertility, agriculture, poss. native American heritage	B
		ivy	progress	
Door Lintels	G, N, S, E	scallop shell	sea	
		acorn	investment in future; potential	
		pelicans	water; also can rep. Christ; mercy; generosity	
		peacock	vision esp. of future	
		bellflower (abstracted)	poss. reference to traditional motif associated with Baltimore furniture in late eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries.	

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Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
Doorway ¹⁰	G, E (Light St.)	man with caduceus looking through a sextant	caduceus, attribute of Mercury, Roman god of commerce, communication and travel; presence of sextant indicates specific meaning here of seafaring. ¹¹	L
		hourglass	time, industry	L
		man with scissors and bolt of cloth	textile industry	L
		beehive	industry, labor	L
		clipper ship	Baltimore's seafaring heritage	L
		bundle of wheat sheaves	agriculture; abundance; yielding of rewards for labor	L
		woman with amphorae	unclear; possibly rivers, falls, sources of fresh water	L
		hourglass (repeated)	time, industry (as above)	L
		man with bridge, sledgehammer & modern city behind	steel industry, engineering, progress	L
		beehive (repeated)	industry, labor	L
		bundle of wheat sheaves (repeated)	agriculture; abundance; yielding of rewards for labor	L
		man screaming with temple form building in his arms; flames behind	Baltimore Fire of 1904; man holds model of previous building on site	L
		beehive (repeated)	industry, labor	L
		woman with model of domed building	unclear; building appears to represent City Hall, in which case figure is the personification of Baltimore	L

¹⁰The sequence of medallions varies from entry to entry. Abbreviations assigned for Light Street (East Entrance) are used to indicate sequence of motifs on Baltimore and Redwood Street entrances.

¹¹Because the caduceus is best known as the emblem of the medical profession, this symbol has generally been identified in local sources as a reference to medicine. Although, by the late twentieth century, the renown of Johns Hopkins Hospital and Medical School had become matters of civic proprietary pride, this was hardly likely in 1929. The sextant clearly refers to sea travel and thus specifies the caduceus of Mercury as an attribute of the god in his incarnation as messenger of the gods, patron of travel, commerce and communication.

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Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
		bundle of wheat sheaves (repeated)	agriculture; abundance; yielding of rewards for labor	L
		man with paper press	printing industry; journalism	L
		beehive (repeated)	industry, labor	L
		man with train	railroad industry	L
		hourglass (repeated)	time, industry (as above)	L
		man with bridge & modern city behind (repeated)	steel industry, engineering, progress	L
		bundle of wheat sheaves (repeated)	agriculture; abundance; yielding of rewards for labor	L
		Woman with Amphorae	unclear; possibly rivers, falls, sources of fresh water	L
Doorway	G, S (Redwood St.)	sequence as follows ¹²	beehive; woman with amphorae; hourglass; man with printing press; beehive; man with train; wheat; woman with City Hall (?); hourglass; clipper ship; wheat; man with bridge; beehive; wheat; man with bridge; wheat; man with caduceus; man with scissors; hourglass	L
Doorway	G, N (Baltimore St.)	sequence as follows	hourglass; clipper ship; beehive; woman with amphorae; man with caduceus; wheat; hourglass; man with train; wheat; man with printing press; beehive; wheat; woman with City Hall (?); man with bridge; wheat; beehive; man with scissors; man with bridge; hourglass, Baltimore Fire/screaming man; beehive	L
Window Grilles	G, N	black-eyed susans	Maryland state flower	B

¹²The more frequent repetition of motifs on this archway may reflect its lower hierarchy as a secondary entrance.

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Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
Frieze	4 (above corbel arcade), S	medallion with caduceus	commerce	L
		eagle	USA, strength	L
		owl	wisdom, vigilance	L
		eagle (repeated)	USA, strength	L
		sunburst	vision, power, the future	L
		owl		L
		eagle		L
		owl		L
		horsehead	poss. the railroad ("iron horse"); military strength; might	L
		eagle		L
		owl		L
		eagle		L
		sunburst	vision, power, the future	L
		owl		L
		eagle		L
		owl		L
		clipper ship	Baltimore's heritage, trade, the harbor	L
		eagle		L
		owl		L
		eagle		L
		oil lamp	utility industry; light/enlightenment; opportunity (Aladdin's lamp)	L
		owl		L
		eagle		L
		owl		L

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Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
		temple portico	poss. rep. old bank on site (tradition); institutional stability	L
Frieze	4, E & N	sequence as follows:	caduceus; owl/eagle/owl; horse; eagle/owl/eagle; oil lamp; owl/eagle/owl; four sunbursts (flagpole stanchions); eagle/owl/eagle; temple portico; owl/eagle/owl; caduceus; eagle/owl/eagle; horse head; owl, eagle/owl; clipper ship	L
Window panels	between 5 & 6 N, E, S, W	rosettes (2 types, alt.)	unknown meaning (if any)	L
	20	sunburst with griffin head, poss. lion	vigilance, watchfulness (lion = leadership, protection)	L
	24	sunburst with rosettes alt. with	virtue	L
		sunburst with faces	standard grotesque motif traditionally meant to ward off misfortune	L
Octagonal Corner Towers	20-5	eagle buttresses	possibly refers to fact that eagles nest at heights and are fiercely protective of their aeries--vigilance, strength over bank's assets	L
	25	turret roof pinnacle or battlements	fortification, protection; security of assets	B
Central Tower Window Panels	24	sunburst with rosettes alt. with	virtue	L
		sunburst with faces	standard grotesque motif traditionally meant to ward off misfortune	L
	25-6 (transom lights)	openwork wave form, poss. stylized tree (meaning same either way)	growth; force of nature	L

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Architectural Element	Location on Building G=ground story N,S,E,W=facade stories indicated by floor number	Motif	Meaning	Material B=bronze L=limestone
	frieze panels	lion's heads in stylized Egyptian head-dresses with shields each featuring ten discs	all emblems refer to the sun, but any more precise meaning is unclear; note frequent use of sunburst motifs elsewhere in building, suggesting the abstract notion of the sun as light, progress, power is a predominant theme of the decorative program	L
Central Tower; top level (balcony)	30 (panels over windows)	shields with various motifs flanked by flowers	unknown, quasi-heraldic	L
	31+	wave buttresses	sea; power	L